

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ARQUITECTONICS: MIND, LAND & SOCIETY

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Call for papers

Title: **DIY PRACTISES, A WAY TO INCREASE SOCIAL COHESION IN PUBLIC HOUSING**

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ABSTRACT

One of the most common problems in suburban areas of our cities is the loss of sense of community, the widespread isolation and general lack of communication between neighbors. The residential buildings arise as totems between highways and commercial areas, without any connecting space as pedestrian pathway or squares. Even inside that buildings life goes on in the complete ignorance of who live next door and each housing unit works as a self-standing cell, except for few occasions of meeting in which converge all the exacerbate frustration of a solitary everyday life in that time of crisis.

In that panorama, local authorities are called for an important challenge, based on the pursuit of generating social cohesion more than ensure basic services. What if the public housing organizations start introducing participatory processes in their policies to recreate sociability? The research is based on an experimental project that introduces Do It Yourself practices in public apartment buildings in the Florence suburban areas, characterized by a high neglect in common spaces, social anxiety and vandalism episodes. The idea is to recreate a sense of collaboration by working together in the renovation process of a common space or designing additional service areas directly suggested by the inhabitants themselves.

The DIY practice becomes for neighbors an opportunity to increase social cohesion and personal benefits at the same time, through a learning period and a sharing of knowledge or even with the aim to create basis for local economies or self-sufficiency tools. At the same time the introduction of participatory processes and DIY practices represent an opportunity for the public housing organizations to define a new way of management of the residential heritage, more based on the collaboration and the relationship with the persons who live in the housing units.